

Message Text

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FOR USIA FOR IPS/PL, IOP/M AND ILA, STATE FOR ARA

1. THE SUNDAY GLEANER OF JAMAICA IVN MAY 8 RAN REMARKABLE PIECE BY COLUMNIST GWYNNE DYER. IT BEGINS UNDER THE HEADLINE "LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD", AS FOLLOWS: "HOWEVER MUCH TROUBLE THE WORLD MAY HAVE HAD GETTING USED TO AMERICA, IT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE DIFFICULTY AMERICA HAS HAD LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE WORLD. PERHAPS IT HAS LEARNED NOW, AS MUCH AS ANY COUNTRY EVER DOES, BUT IT HAS BEEN A LONG, BUMPY ROAD SINCE THE DAY SIXTY YEARS AGO THIS WEEK, WHEN THE UNITED STATES ENTERED THE FIRST WORLD WAR. IT IS HARD AND THANKLESS WORK BEING AN APPRENTICE SUPERPOWER, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU HAVEN'T EVEN PRACTICED BEING AN ORDINARY POWER.

PART OF THE REASON FOR AMERICA'S DIFFICULTIES LIES IN A SIMPLE, RARELY NOTICE FACT. FRANCE, BRITAIN AND GERMANY ARE DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, NOW EVEN SPAIN, FOUR CENTURIES AFTER IT FELL FROM SUPERPOWER RANK, IS MOVING TOWARDS DEMOCRACY--BUT THE UNITED STATES IS THE ONLY COUNTRY TO BE A FULLY FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY AT THE SAME TIME IT ENJOYS THAT EXALTED STATUS. EVEN IN THE MOST CYNICAL COUNTRY THAT WOULD RAISE AWKWARD CONFLICTS BETWEEN POPULAR IDEALISM AND PRACTICAL DIPLOMACY, BUT AMERICA IS NOT A CYNICAL COUNTRY."

2. THE SECOND SPECIAL THING ABOUT AMERICA, SAYS DYER, IS THAT IN ITS FIRST 150 YEARS IT "MIGHT HAVE BEEN ON ANOTHER PLANET AS FAR
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AS DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL WAR WERE CONCERNED." INSULATED BY OCEANS, WITHOUT RIVALS IN THE HEMISPHERE, " IT LIVED A CHARMED EXISTENCE. THERE WERE NO SUCH THINGS AS PERMANENT THREATS OF SECURITY THAT YOU COULDN'T ELIMINATE AND SIMPLY HAD TO LIVE WITH, NO INSOLUBLE PROBLEMS."

3. THERE FOLLOWS AN EXTENSIVE REPRIS OF AMERICAN HISTORY, ILLUSTRATE-

TIVE OF THIS THEME, UNTIL THE LOSS OF INNOCENCE IN WW I., OUR CONTINU
ED

PROGRESS DOWN THE PRIMROSE PATH IS BRIEFED: WILSON'S DISILUSION, THE
RETREAT TO ISOLATION, WW II, THE TENDENCY TO SEE DIVERGING NATIONAL
INTEREST DESTROYING WAR-TIME ALLIANCES AS BETRAYAL, THE ADVENT OF
MCCARTHYISM, THE "MORAL SIMPLICITIES OF THE COLD WAR". THE ARTICLE
THEN CONCLUDES AS FOLLOWS.

4. QUOTE: THOSE DAYS ARE LONG PAST NOW. EVEN THE GREAT AMERICAN
PUBLIC REALIZES THAT YOU CAN'T ALWAYS HAVE YOUR WAY IN THE WORLD, AND
THAT INSECURITY IS PERMANENT. OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS IN CONSTANT
CONTACT WITH DIPLOMACY LEARNED THAT A GOOD DEAL EARLIER, AND INDEED
BECAME SO PROUD OF THEIR NEW SOPHISTICATION THAT THEY GOT CARRIED AWA
Y
BY IT.

THE SHEER EMPHASIS ON POWER AT THE EXPENSE OF IDEALISM OF THAT
ULTRA-EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT, DR. HENRY KISSINGER, SUCCESSFUL THOUGH
SOME OF IT MAY HAVE BEEN, WAS FUNDAMENTALLY ALIEN TO THE AMERICAN
TRADITION. FOR MOST AMERICANS THE WORLD CANNOT JUST BE AN ETERNAL
GAME OF SNAKES AND LADDERS; IT NEEDS A MORAL DIMENSION.
NOR SHOULD AMERICAN IDEALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SIMPLY BE
DESPISED AS NAIVE. UNALLOYED WITH A SENSE OF REALISM, IT WAS LUDI-
CROUS AND EVEN DANGEROUS, BUT IT IS AN UNUSUAL AND VALUABLE COMPO-
NENT IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF A SUPERPOWER. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A
JUST AND PERFECT WORLD ORDER DOES NOT MEAN YOU SHOULDN'T STRIVE
FOR A BETTER ONE.

THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, THEREFORE,
IS THAT IT MAY REPRESENT THE UNITED STATE'S COMING OF AGE IN ITS
RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD. SOMEHOW THE TRADITIONAL IDEALISM IS BEING
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MADE TO LIVE ALONGSIDE REALISM ABOUT THE PRACTICALITIES OF POWER.
AFTER THE FOLLIES OF THE COLD WAR WHEN EVERYONE WAS A COMMITTED
IDEALIST, AND THE CYNICISM OF THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS WHEN POWER WAS
THE NAME OF THE GAME, A TENTATIVE BALANCE HAS BEEN STRUCK: A FOREIGN
POLICY THAT SEES THE WORLD AS IT IS, BUT DOES NOT APPROVE OF OR GLORY
IN ITS DEPRAVITY.

IN HIS OWN PERSON JIMMY CARTER, WHATEVER HIS BLUNT INDISCRETIONS,
EMBODIES THE SYNTHESIS. HE CARES ABOUT JUSTICE, BUT HE UNDERSTANDS
ABOUT POWER. AND ON THE WHOLE, THE UNITED STATES NOW FINDS ITSELF COM

-
FORTABLE WITH THAT SORT OF COMPROMISE APPROACH TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE.
END QUOTE.

5. NOTE: GWYNNE DYER IS A JAMAICAN WHO LIVES PERMANENTLY "OFF THE
ISLAND"-- NOT IN AMERICA, BUT FURTHER THE GLEANER SAYETH NOT.

DORRANCE

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